



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/100,133	06/19/1998	DOUGLAS W. CONMY	52817.000013	8229
29315	7590	03/22/2004	EXAMINER	
MINTZ LEVIN COHN FERRIS GLOVSKY AND POPEO PC 12010 SUNSET HILLS ROAD SUITE 900 RESTON, VA 20190			MEINECKE DIAZ, SUSANNA M	
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
			3623	

DATE MAILED: 03/22/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/100,133	CONMY ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Susanna M. Diaz	3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 March 2004.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. In response to Applicant's persuasive arguments presented in the after-final response filed March 1, 2004, the after-final response has been entered and finality has been withdrawn. A non-final Office action follows.

Claims 1-37 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-20, 23, 25-27, and 29-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zhang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,016,478) in view of Meeting Maker XP, as disclosed in Rizzo ("Meeting Maker XP: ON Technology Takes Its Group Scheduler Cross-Platform").

Zhang discloses a system for scheduling time intervals for a plurality of invitees comprising:

[Claim 1] database means in communication with one or more server means for storing one or more invitee profiles for one or more potential invitees of the system, the one or more invitee profiles comprising user profiles wherein each user profile comprises an electronic mail address for the user (Figs. 5E, 5G, 7C; col. 11, lines 54-59);

request generating means, connected over a network to the one or more server means, for generating a request for allocation of a time interval for the one or more potential invitees (col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23);

means for scheduling a meeting by using the electronic mail address in the invitee profile to send each of the one or more potential invitees available an invitation to attend at the time interval requested thereby making each of the one or more potential invitees an invitee, wherein the electronic mail invitation includes a plurality of response options for the invitee to respond to the electronic mail invitation, wherein the plurality of response options includes accepting the electronic mail invitation and declining the electronic mail invitation (Figs. 5E, 5G, 7C; col. 5, line 66 through col. 6, line 46; col. 11, lines 54-59);

means for enabling the invitee to respond to the electronic mail invitation using at least one of the plurality of response options (Fig. 7C; col. 13, lines 14-59); and

means for automatically updating the invitee's invitee profile based on the invitee's response to the electronic mail invitation (col. 7, lines 27-32; col. 8, lines 59-62);

[Claim 2] wherein the invitee profiles comprise resource profiles regarding one or more resources (Figs. 8A, 8C ; col. 9, lines 23-50; col. 16, lines 14-23);

[Claim 3] wherein the one or more resources include rooms and wherein the profile comprises information about the capacity of each room (Fig. 8C; col. 9, lines 23-50; col. 15, lines 28-29);

[Claim 4] wherein the one or more resources include equipment (col. 9, lines 23-50);

[Claim 31] wherein the plurality of response options further includes assigning a substitute attendee for the meeting and requesting for re-scheduling the meeting (col. 13, lines 39-59).

Regarding claims 1 and 2, Zhang invites potential meeting attendees to a meeting using an electronic message system that transmits meeting invitations and corresponding responses via a server (as discussed above). The potential meeting attendees alert the meeting planner as to whether or not they can attend based on their own stored calendars. When a potential meeting attendee is not available for a proposed meeting, he/she has the option of attaching his/her "Calendar's Free Time Report for Next 30 Days" (Fig. 6B) in order to assist the meeting planner in assessing a better date for the proposed meeting (col. 15, lines 1-10). Therefore, Zhang's potential meeting attendees manually make the meeting planner aware of their respective schedules and may optionally attach a file containing information regarding each potential attendee's free time for the next 30 days; Zhang's server transmits these electronic mail messages among the various potential meeting attendees and meeting planners, yet the server itself does not avail the meeting planner of each potential meeting attendee's schedule before the meeting invitation is initially sent out. However, Meeting Maker XP makes up for this deficiency in its teaching of a calendar window that allows a meeting planner to pick a time when all potential invitees are available by displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to

sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation (¶ 7). Similar to Zhang's invention, Meeting Maker XP "lets mixed-platform workgroups plan meetings and coordinate schedules over a network" (Rizzo, ¶ 2). This feature of Meeting Maker XP provides a natural enhancement to Zhang who is also facilitating group scheduling of a meeting over a network; therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to implement Meeting Maker XP's capability of displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation, which is understood as accessing each potential invitee's availability information (e.g., based on previously scheduled events, activities, vacations, etc.) as indicated in each potential invitee's respective calendar profile via a database(s) connected to at least one server, with Zhang's invention in order to assist Zhang's meeting planner in selecting a date that is likely most amenable to all potential invitees' schedules before sending out the initial meeting invitation. This saves the meeting planner time and hassle that would otherwise be associated with going back and forth between the potential invitees until a meeting time and date free for all necessary invitees are identified and agreed upon. It is noted that Zhang's invitees may include human participants as well as resources, such as rooms and equipment, as discussed above.

Zhang discloses a system for scheduling time intervals for a plurality of invitees comprising:

[Claim 5] one or more databases, in communication with one or more servers, which store one or more invitee profiles for one or more potential invitees of the system, the one or more invitee profiles comprising user profiles wherein each user profile comprises information regarding an electronic mail address for the user (Figs. 5E, 5G, 7C; col. 11, lines 54-59);

one or more user workstations, connected over a network to the servers, operating a calendaring system that permits a user to request allocation of a time interval for the one or more potential invitees (Figs. 1B, 2, 9; col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23);

wherein the calendaring system gathers profiles for the one or more potential invitees by using the electronic mail address stored in the invitee profile for the one or more potential invitees to send an invitation to the one or more potential invitees thereby making each of the one or more potential invitees an invitee, wherein the electronic mail invitation includes a plurality of response options for the invitee to respond to the electronic mail invitation, wherein the plurality of response options includes accepting the electronic mail invitation and declining the electronic mail invitation (Figs. 5E, 5G, 7C; col. 5, line 66 through col. 6, line 46; col. 11, lines 54-59);

wherein the calendaring system enables the invitee to respond to the electronic mail invitation using at least one of the plurality of response options (Fig. 7C; col. 13, lines 14-59); and

wherein the calendaring system automatically updates the invitee's invitee profile based on the invitee's response to the electronic mail invitation (col. 7, lines 27-32; col. 8, lines 59-62);

[Claim 8] wherein the invitee profiles comprise resource profiles regarding one or more resources (Figs. 8A, 8C ; col. 9, lines 23-50; col. 16, lines 14-23);

[Claim 9] wherein the one or more resources include rooms and wherein the profile comprises information about the capacity of the room (Fig. 8C; col. 9, lines 23-50; col. 15, lines 28-29);

[Claim 10] wherein the one or more resources include equipment (col. 9, lines 23-50);

[Claim 32] wherein the plurality of response options further includes assigning a substitute attendee for the meeting and requesting for re-scheduling the meeting (col. 13, lines 39-59).

Regarding claims 5 and 8, Zhang invites potential meeting attendees to a meeting using an electronic message system that transmits meeting invitations and corresponding responses via a server (as discussed above). The potential meeting attendees alert the meeting planner as to whether or not they can attend based on their own stored calendars. When a potential meeting attendee is not available for a proposed meeting, he/she has the option of attaching his/her "Calendar's Free Time Report for Next 30 Days" (Fig. 6B) in order to assist the meeting planner in assessing a better date for the proposed meeting (col. 15, lines 1-10). Therefore, Zhang's potential meeting attendees manually make the meeting planner aware of their respective

Art Unit: 3623

schedules and may optionally attach a file containing information regarding each potential attendee's free time for the next 30 days; Zhang's server transmits these electronic mail messages among the various potential meeting attendees and meeting planners, yet the server itself does not avail the meeting planner of each potential meeting attendee's schedule before the meeting invitation is initially sent out. However, Meeting Maker XP makes up for this deficiency in its teaching of a calendar window that allows a meeting planner to pick a time when all potential invitees are available by displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation (¶ 7). Similar to Zhang's invention, Meeting Maker XP "lets mixed-platform workgroups plan meetings and coordinate schedules over a network" (Rizzo, ¶ 2). This feature of Meeting Maker XP provides a natural enhancement to Zhang who is also facilitating group scheduling of a meeting over a network; therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to implement Meeting Maker XP's capability of displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation, which is understood as accessing each potential invitee's availability information (e.g., based on previously scheduled events, activities, vacations, etc.) as indicated in each potential invitee's respective calendar profile via a database(s) connected to at least one server, with Zhang's invention in order to assist Zhang's meeting planner in selecting a date that is likely most amenable to all potential invitees' schedules before sending out the initial meeting invitation. This saves the meeting

planner time and hassle that would otherwise be associated with going back and forth between the potential invitees until a meeting time and date free for all necessary invitees are identified and agreed upon. It is noted that Zhang's invitees may include human participants as well as resources, such as rooms and equipment, as discussed above.

Zhang discloses a process for scheduling time intervals for a plurality of invitees comprising:

[Claim 6] storing one or more invitee profiles for one or more potential invitees of the system in a database in communication with one or more servers, the one or more invitee profiles comprising user profiles wherein each user profile comprises information regarding an electronic mail address for the user (Figs. 5E, 5G, 7C; col. 11, lines 54-59);

receiving a request for allocation of a time interval for the one or more potential invitees from a remote workstation over a network at one or more servers (col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23);

gathering the profiles for the one or more potential invitees that are available in the database (Fig. 5E; col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23 -- The listed contact names and corresponding e-mail addresses are a collection of potential invitee profiles);

inviting the one or more potential invitees to attend at the time interval requested by using the electronic mail address stored in the profile for those one or more potential

invitees to send an invitation to the one or more potential invitees thereby making each of the one or more potential invitees an invitee, wherein the electronic mail invitation includes a plurality of response options for the invitee to respond to the electronic mail invitation, wherein the plurality of response options includes accepting the electronic mail invitation and declining the electronic mail invitation (Figs. 5E, 5G, 7C; col. 5, line 66 through col. 6, line 46; col. 11, lines 54-59);

enabling the invitee to respond to the electronic mail invitation using at least one of the plurality of response options (Fig. 7C; col. 13, lines 14-59); and

automatically updating the invitee's invitee profile based on the invitee's response to the electronic mail invitation (col. 7, lines 27-32; col. 8, lines 59-62);

[Claim 11] wherein the invitee profiles comprise resource profiles regarding one or more resources (Figs. 8A, 8C ; col. 9, lines 23-50; col. 16, lines 14-23);

[Claim 12] wherein the one or more resources include rooms and wherein the profile comprises information about the capacity of the rooms (Fig. 8C; col. 9, lines 23-50; col. 15, lines 28-29);

[Claim 13] wherein the one or more resources include equipment (col. 9, lines 23-50);

[Claim 33] wherein the plurality of response options further includes assigning a substitute attendee for the meeting and requesting for re-scheduling the meeting (col. 13, lines 39-59).

Regarding claims 6 and 11, Zhang invites potential meeting attendees to a meeting using an electronic message system that transmits meeting invitations and

corresponding responses via a server (as discussed above). The potential meeting attendees alert the meeting planner as to whether or not they can attend based on their own stored calendars. When a potential meeting attendee is not available for a proposed meeting, he/she has the option of attaching his/her "Calendar's Free Time Report for Next 30 Days" (Fig. 6B) in order to assist the meeting planner in assessing a better date for the proposed meeting (col. 15, lines 1-10). Therefore, Zhang's potential meeting attendees manually make the meeting planner aware of their respective schedules and may optionally attach a file containing information regarding each potential attendee's free time for the next 30 days; Zhang's server transmits these electronic mail messages among the various potential meeting attendees and meeting planners, yet the server itself does not avail the meeting planner of each potential meeting attendee's schedule before the meeting invitation is initially sent out. However, Meeting Maker XP makes up for this deficiency in its teaching of a calendar window that allows a meeting planner to pick a time when all potential invitees are available by displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation (¶ 7). Similar to Zhang's invention, Meeting Maker XP "lets mixed-platform workgroups plan meetings and coordinate schedules over a network" (Rizzo, ¶ 2). This feature of Meeting Maker XP provides a natural enhancement to Zhang who is also facilitating group scheduling of a meeting over a network; therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to implement Meeting Maker XP's capability of displaying "a composite of the schedules of

Art Unit: 3623

all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation, which is understood as accessing each potential invitee's availability information (e.g., based on previously scheduled events, activities, vacations, etc.) as indicated in each potential invitee's respective calendar profile via a database(s) connected to at least one server, with Zhang's invention in order to assist Zhang's meeting planner in selecting a date that is likely most amenable to all potential invitees' schedules before sending out the initial meeting invitation. This saves the meeting planner time and hassle that would otherwise be associated with going back and forth between the potential invitees until a meeting time and date free for all necessary invitees are identified and agreed upon. It is noted that Zhang's invitees may include human participants as well as resources, such as rooms and equipment, as discussed above.

Zhang discloses a processor usable medium having processor readable code embodied therein for enabling group calendaring between a plurality of users on a computer system, the system comprising a database, associated with one or more servers, which stores one or more invitee profiles for one or more potential invitees of the system, the invitee profiles comprising user profiles wherein each user profile comprises information regarding an electronic mail address for the user (Figs. 5E, 5G, 7C; col. 11, lines 54-59), the processor readable code in the processor usable medium comprising:

[Claim 7] processor readable code for causing a processor to receive a request for allocation of a time interval for one or more potential invitees (col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23);

processor readable code for causing a processor to gather the profiles for the one or more potential invitees (Fig. 5E; col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23 -- The listed contact names and corresponding e-mail addresses are a collection of potential invitee profiles);

processor readable code for causing a processor to invite the one or more potential invitees to attend a meeting at the requested time interval by using the electronic mail address stored in the profile for each invitee to send an electronic mail invitation to the one or more potential invitees thereby making each of the one or more potential invitees an invitee, wherein the electronic mail invitation includes a plurality of response options for the invitee to respond to the electronic mail invitation, wherein the plurality of response options includes accepting the electronic mail invitation and declining the electronic mail invitation (Figs. 5E, 5G, 7C; col. 5, line 66 through col. 6, line 46; col. 11, lines 54-59);

processor readable code for causing a processor to enable the invitee to respond to the electronic mail invitation using at least one of the plurality of response options (Fig. 7C; col. 13, lines 14-59); and

processor readable code for causing a processor to automatically update the invitee's invitee profile based on the invitee's response to the electronic mail invitation (col. 7, lines 27-32; col. 8, lines 59-62);

[Claim 14] wherein the invitee profiles comprise resource profiles regarding one or more resources (Figs. 8A, 8C ; col. 9, lines 23-50; col. 16, lines 14-23);

[Claim 15] wherein the one or more resources include rooms and wherein the profile comprises information about the capacity of the rooms (Fig. 8C; col. 9, lines 23-50; col. 15, lines 28-29);

[Claim 16] wherein the one or more resources include equipment (col. 9, lines 23-50);

[Claim 34] wherein the plurality of response options further includes assigning a substitute attendee for the meeting and requesting for re-scheduling the meeting (col. 13, lines 39-59).

Regarding claims 7 and 14, Zhang invites potential meeting attendees to a meeting using an electronic message system that transmits meeting invitations and corresponding responses via a server (as discussed above). The potential meeting attendees alert the meeting planner as to whether or not they can attend based on their own stored calendars. When a potential meeting attendee is not available for a proposed meeting, he/she has the option of attaching his/her "Calendar's Free Time Report for Next 30 Days" (Fig. 6B) in order to assist the meeting planner in assessing a better date for the proposed meeting (col. 15, lines 1-10). Therefore, Zhang's potential meeting attendees manually make the meeting planner aware of their respective schedules and may optionally attach a file containing information regarding each potential attendee's free time for the next 30 days; Zhang's server transmits these electronic mail messages among the various potential meeting attendees and meeting

planners, yet the server itself does not avail the meeting planner of each potential meeting attendee's schedule before the meeting invitation is initially sent out. However, Meeting Maker XP makes up for this deficiency in its teaching of a calendar window that allows a meeting planner to pick a time when all potential invitees are available by displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation (¶ 7). Similar to Zhang's invention, Meeting Maker XP "lets mixed-platform workgroups plan meetings and coordinate schedules over a network" (Rizzo, ¶ 2). This feature of Meeting Maker XP provides a natural enhancement to Zhang who is also facilitating group scheduling of a meeting over a network; therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to implement Meeting Maker XP's capability of displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation, which is understood as accessing each potential invitee's availability information (e.g., based on previously scheduled events, activities, vacations, etc.) as indicated in each potential invitee's respective calendar profile via a database(s) connected to at least one server, with Zhang's invention in order to assist Zhang's meeting planner in selecting a date that is likely most amenable to all potential invitees' schedules before sending out the initial meeting invitation. This saves the meeting planner time and hassle that would otherwise be associated with going back and forth between the potential invitees until a meeting time and date free for all necessary invitees are identified and agreed upon. It is noted that Zhang's invitees may include

human participants as well as resources, such as rooms and equipment, as discussed above.

Zhang discloses a system for scheduling an event, comprising:

[Claim 17] a user system operable to send to the server a scheduling request specifying a list of invitees, a date, a start time, and an end time and/or a duration which determines the end time (Figs. 1A-3C; 5D; col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23), wherein

the server is further operable to:

receive the scheduling request (col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23);

send an invitation to one or more of the invitees listed in the request, wherein the electronic mail invitation includes a plurality of response options for the invitee to respond to the electronic mail invitation, wherein the plurality of response options includes accepting the electronic mail invitation and declining the electronic mail invitation (Figs. 5E, 5G, 7C; col. 5, line 66 through col. 6, line 46; col. 11, lines 54-59);

receive from an invitee a response to the electronic mail invitation having at least one of the plurality of response options (Fig. 7C; col. 13, lines 14-59); and

automatically modify the availability information for the invitee if the invitee's response indicates that the invitee accepts the electronic mail invitation, wherein the availability information is modified to indicate that the invitee is busy

between at least the start time and end time on the date specified in the request (col. 7, lines 27-32; col. 8, lines 59-62);

[Claim 23] wherein availability information for an invitee comprises profile information (Fig. 5E; col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23);

[Claim 35] wherein the plurality of response options further includes assigning a substitute attendee for the meeting and requesting for re-scheduling the meeting (col. 13, lines 39-59).

Regarding claims 17, 18, 23, and 25, Zhang invites potential meeting attendees to a meeting using an electronic message system that transmits meeting invitations and corresponding responses via a server (as discussed above). The potential meeting attendees alert the meeting planner as to whether or not they can attend based on their own stored calendars. When a potential meeting attendee is not available for a proposed meeting, he/she has the option of attaching his/her "Calendar's Free Time Report for Next 30 Days" (Fig. 6B) in order to assist the meeting planner in assessing a better date for the proposed meeting (col. 15, lines 1-10). Therefore, Zhang's potential meeting attendees manually make the meeting planner aware of their respective schedules and may optionally attach a file containing information regarding each potential attendee's free time for the next 30 days; Zhang's server transmits these electronic mail messages among the various potential meeting attendees and meeting planners, yet the server itself does not avail the meeting planner of each potential meeting attendee's schedule before the meeting invitation is initially sent out. However,

Art Unit: 3623

Meeting Maker XP makes up for this deficiency in its teaching of a calendar window that allows a meeting planner to pick a time when all potential invitees are available by displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation (¶ 7). Similar to Zhang's invention, Meeting Maker XP "lets mixed-platform workgroups plan meetings and coordinate schedules over a network" (Rizzo, ¶ 2). This feature of Meeting Maker XP provides a natural enhancement to Zhang who is also facilitating group scheduling of a meeting over a network; therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to implement Meeting Maker XP's capability of displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation, which is understood as accessing each potential invitee's availability information (e.g., based on previously scheduled events, activities, vacations, etc.) as indicated in each potential invitee's respective calendar profile via a database(s) connected to at least one server, with Zhang's invention in order to assist Zhang's meeting planner in selecting a date that is likely most amenable to all potential invitees' schedules before sending out the initial meeting invitation. This saves the meeting planner time and hassle that would otherwise be associated with going back and forth between the potential invitees until a meeting time and date free for all necessary invitees are identified and agreed upon.

Furthermore, as per claims 19 and 20, Meeting Maker XP discloses an "Auto-Pick feature" with its composite schedule display capabilities. Auto-Pick allows a

meeting planner "to get Meeting Maker XP to locate the earliest time slot available for all of your required guests" (¶ 7). Since Auto-Pick finds the earliest time slot available for all required guests, it is understood that the Auto-Pick feature assigns a greater weighting value to required guests than optional guests, which are specified by the meeting planner (¶¶ 6-7). Again, this feature of Meeting Maker XP provides a natural enhancement to Zhang who is also facilitating group scheduling of a meeting over a network; therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to implement Meeting Maker XP's Auto-Pick feature, which is understood as utilizing a server to determine one or more alternative start times for the event, wherein the determination is based, at least in part, on the retrieved availability information (claim 19) and wherein the determination of the one or more alternative start times is further based on weighting values assigned to one or more of the invitees (claim 20), as part of Zhang's invention in order to assist Zhang's meeting planner in selecting a date that is likely most amenable to all potential invitees' schedules before sending out the initial meeting invitation. This saves the meeting planner time and hassle that would otherwise be associated with going back and forth between the potential invitees until a meeting time and date free for all necessary invitees are identified and agreed upon. Furthermore, as more potential invitees are invited to a meeting, it becomes more difficult to establish a date and time amenable to all invitees; therefore, it is more realistic and productive to find a date and time amenable to those invitees whose presence at the meeting is crucial. The weighting values corresponding to required or optional invitees facilitate such a

determination when utilizing the Auto-Pick feature and also provide the same benefit to a user of Zhang's invention.

Zhang discloses a method for scheduling an event, comprising:

[Claim 26] receiving from an event coordinator a scheduling request specifying a list of invitees, a date, a start time, and an end time and/or a duration which determines the end time (Figs. 1A-3C; 5D; col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23);

sending an invitation to one or more of the invitees listed in the request, wherein the electronic mail invitation includes a plurality of response options for the invitee to respond to the electronic mail invitation, wherein the plurality of response options includes accepting the electronic mail invitation and declining the electronic mail invitation (Figs. 5E, 5G, 7C; col. 5, line 66 through col. 6, line 46; col. 11, lines 54-59);

receiving from an invitee a response to the electronic mail invitation having at least one of the plurality of response options (Fig. 7C; col. 13, lines 14-59); and

automatically modifying the availability information for the invitee in response to receiving the invitee's response if the invitee's response indicates that the invitee accepts the invitation, wherein the availability information is modified to indicate that the invitee is busy between at least the start time and end time on the date specified in the request (col. 7, lines 27-32; col. 8, lines 59-62);

[Claim 27] wherein availability information for an invitee comprises profile information (Fig. 5E; col. 10, lines 44-64; col. 11, line 6 through col. 12, line 11; col. 16, lines 14-23);

Art Unit: 3623

[Claim 36] wherein the plurality of response options further includes assigning a substitute attendee for the meeting and requesting for re-scheduling the meeting (col. 13, lines 39-59).

Regarding claims 26, 27, and 29, Zhang invites potential meeting attendees to a meeting using an electronic message system that transmits meeting invitations and corresponding responses via a server (as discussed above). The potential meeting attendees alert the meeting planner as to whether or not they can attend based on their own stored calendars. When a potential meeting attendee is not available for a proposed meeting, he/she has the option of attaching his/her "Calendar's Free Time Report for Next 30 Days" (Fig. 6B) in order to assist the meeting planner in assessing a better date for the proposed meeting (col. 15, lines 1-10). Therefore, Zhang's potential meeting attendees manually make the meeting planner aware of their respective schedules and may optionally attach a file containing information regarding each potential attendee's free time for the next 30 days; Zhang's server transmits these electronic mail messages among the various potential meeting attendees and meeting planners, yet the server itself does not avail the meeting planner of each potential meeting attendee's schedule before the meeting invitation is initially sent out. However, Meeting Maker XP makes up for this deficiency in its teaching of a calendar window that allows a meeting planner to pick a time when all potential invitees are available by displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation (¶ 7). Similar to Zhang's

invention, Meeting Maker XP "lets mixed-platform workgroups plan meetings and coordinate schedules over a network" (Rizzo, ¶ 2). This feature of Meeting Maker XP provides a natural enhancement to Zhang who is also facilitating group scheduling of a meeting over a network; therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to implement Meeting Maker XP's capability of displaying "a composite of the schedules of all required and optional guests" prior to sending each potential invitee the initial meeting invitation, which is understood as accessing each potential invitee's availability information (e.g., based on previously scheduled events, activities, vacations, etc.) as indicated in each potential invitee's respective calendar profile via a database(s) connected to at least one server, with Zhang's invention in order to assist Zhang's meeting planner in selecting a date that is likely most amenable to all potential invitees' schedules before sending out the initial meeting invitation. This saves the meeting planner time and hassle that would otherwise be associated with going back and forth between the potential invitees until a meeting time and date free for all necessary invitees are identified and agreed upon. It is noted that Zhang's invitees may include human participants as well as resources, such as rooms and equipment, as discussed above.

[Claims 30, 37] Claims 30 and 37 recite limitations already addressed by the rejection of claims 26 and 36 above; therefore, the same rejection applies.

Art Unit: 3623

4. Claims 21, 22, 24, and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zhang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,016,478) in view of Meeting Maker XP, as disclosed in Rizzo ("Meeting Maker XP: ON Technology Takes Its Group Scheduler Cross-Platform"), as applied to claims 17, 23, and 27 above, and further in view of Tognazzini (U.S. Patent No. 5,790,974).

Zhang's scheduling system allows a meeting planner to specify the location and time zone of a proposed event (Figs. 5I, 6A, 7A, 13; col. 11, lines 44-53), yet Zhang does not explicitly take invitee location into account in order to determine invitee availability for a particular event; however, Tognazzini makes up for this deficiency. Tognazzini teaches an automated scheduling system that takes into account event location and invitee location in order to determine if the invitee can feasibly attend the event in question (e.g., based on travel time). There may be a periodic real-time check to see where the invitee is presently located and then if the invitee can arrive at his/her next planned event in time, based on a real-time determination of travel time to the next scheduled event. An alert is provided if the invitee is running late or stuck in traffic and cannot make his/her next scheduled event in time. Also, travel time is taken into account when determining an invitee's ability to attend a future event (column 7, lines 11-66). This consideration of travel time between locations and events helps alleviate any conflicts in scheduling that would otherwise arise due to failure to take into account the reality that travel time is needed to get from one location to another. Furthermore, Zhang's invention is intended to be utilized by participants throughout various time zones (col. 2, lines 16-20); therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been

obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to implement Tognazzini's consideration of event location and invitee location, including travel time, when determining invitee availability with Zhang's scheduling system in order to provide for more accurate and realistic assessment of the availability of all invitees when planning an event. For example, if one of the invitees is listed as available for a meeting at 2 p.m. E.S.T. on a particular day in Washington, D.C., but the invitee is out in San Francisco for a meeting which runs from 12 to 1 p.m. E.S.T. (9 to 10 a.m. P.S.T.), obviously the invitee cannot likely fly back to make the meeting in Washington, D.C. within an hour. The integration of Tognazzini's scheduling features enables Zhang's invention to take such location considerations into account, thereby resulting in more "intelligent" scheduling decisions being made by Zhang as part of its scheduling features.

Furthermore, regarding claims 24 and 28, Zhang does not expressly teach that the profile information for an invitee comprises information regarding the invitee's work hours; however, Zhang assists in scheduling various events, such as business/work related meetings (Fig. 5C). Zhang also stores a schedule of resources that can be reserved, such as a conference room (Fig. 8E). Business/work related meetings and conference rooms are typically conducted and utilized during work hours; therefore, the availability of a person or a resource for work-related activities would likely depend on the person's work hours and work hours of the entity (e.g., person or business) maintaining the requested resource. As such, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to

include information regarding the invitee's work hours in the invitee's profile as part of the Zhang-Tognazzini combination in order to facilitate the planning of work-related events (i.e., events which are normally conducted during the work hours of a person and/or business).

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to Applicant's disclosure.

The references cited on the attached PTO Form 892 and not applied in the art rejection disclose various aspects of well-known scheduling systems. These scheduling systems contain various permutations of features recited in the claimed invention.

6. This Office action has an attached requirement for information under 37 C.F.R. § 1.105. A complete response to this Office action must include a complete response to the attached requirement for information. The time period for reply to the attached requirement coincides with the time period for reply to this Office action.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Susanna M. Diaz whose telephone number is (703) 305-1337. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9 am - 5 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (703) 305-9643.

Art Unit: 3623

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-1113.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

**Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450**

or faxed to:

(703)305-7687 [Official communications; including After Final communications labeled "Box AF"]

(703)746-7048 [Informal/Draft communications, labeled "PROPOSED" or "DRAFT"]

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, 22202, 7th floor receptionist.



Susanna M. Diaz
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3623
March 17, 2004